

**Senator Udall Floor Speech  
For the People Act  
October 30, 2019**

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Mr./Madam President, the American people sent us here to do the people's business. But under Republican leadership, the Senate is not responding to what the American people need and want. We are not solving the kitchen table issues the people who elected us face every day.

For example. We are not making sure every American has access to affordable, quality health care. We need to lower costs and take on big pharma. But we are not.

We are not passing common sense gun safety legislation – that 90 percent of the voters support – to stop the shootings in our schools, on our streets, in our communities. If we can't pass bills that save children's lives, our democracy is not working.

We are not even taking on the most pressing issue facing our planet – climate change. Younger generations are urging us to act. But this body is running away from taking any action.

The number of gravestones in the Majority Leader's legislative graveyard – where urgent bills are stalled and buried – steadily mounts.

And Congress will not – and cannot – do the people's business ... when the bills to fix our democracy also rest in that graveyard.

The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the For the People Act, H.R. 1 in March. At that same time, I introduced the Senate Companion to the For the People Act – which has the support of all 47 Democrats and Independents in the Senate. But Leader McConnell has buried the For the People Act – to restore our democracy – alongside a pile of other good and necessary bills.

The For the People Act repairs our broken campaign finance system, opens up the ballot box to all Americans, and lays waste to the corruption in Washington. These are all reforms that the American people support. Why won't the Senate Majority Leader let us vote on them?

M/M President. There's hardly a day that goes by that we don't see evidence of why it's so important that we pass the For the People Act.

Foreign influence in our elections is only growing. 2016 was just the start.

Associates of the President's personal lawyer have been indicted for laundering foreign money into our elections. The President's lawyer is under investigation for the same.

Political ads from foreign sources are flooding social media.

Our bill fights foreign tampering in our democracy. It prohibits domestic corporations with foreign control from spending money in U.S. elections. It cracks down on shell companies used to launder foreign money into our elections.

Our bill makes sure American elections are decided by American voters -- without foreign interference. It protects our democratic institutions, increase oversight over election vendors, requires paper ballots, and supports security upgrades for states' voting systems.

This body should have gotten serious about election security immediately after the 2016 election. But under the Majority Leader's direction, we have not.

And at a time of increased foreign interference, the President has invited foreign assistance – in any way it might benefit him – personally, politically, or financially.

M/M President. Day in and day out we see this President taking full advantage of his position to benefit himself, his family, and his political prospects.

The President never divested. He never formed a blind trust for his assets.

And so now, every day, we see foreign officials and foreign nationals currying favor with the President, and padding his pocket book, wining and dining at Trump properties.

Indeed, Mr. Giuliani and his two close associates lunched at Trump International, right here in Washington, just before these two individuals were picked up at Dulles International Airport with their one-way tickets abroad. The same individuals that have been charged with illegally funneling foreign money into our democracy. And, the President only relented from hosting the next G-7 summit at his Doral resort in Miami after Republicans told him even they couldn't defend it.

All while the President calls the Emoluments Clause – intended to stop these very abuses -- “phony.”

The For the People Act requires the president to fully disclose his or her financial interests and disclose the last ten years of tax returns. Something this President has never done. It requires the president to fully divest and transfer all assets to a blind trust.

The American people deserve to know their president is acting in the national interest, not in his or her own self-interest. Or subject to leverage by foreign interests who seek to corrupt our electoral process.

The intelligence community has been very clear with their disturbing warnings. Adverse foreign interests are actively trying to manipulate our democracy. They did so in 2016 — as the Mueller report and prosecutions from that investigation confirmed. And they are trying to do so again in 2020. We are watching it happen in real time before our eyes.

These foreign interests are not red or blue, not Democratic or Republican. They will use whoever they can to pursue their interests. Interests that are often opposed to ours or simply corrupt. So we must unite in defense of our electoral system, and in defense of the sanctity of our democracy.

Like the other bills Democrats are seeking to pass this week, the For the People Act would provide that protection.

The House version, H.R. 1, would do so as well. We want to partner with Republicans in these efforts. We're open to negotiation.

But while the American people demand that we fix our out-of-control campaign finance system, make sure elections are secure, and root out the corruption in Washington — bills to address these issues gather dust on the Leader's desk.

M/M President. I, for one, will not stop fighting for comprehensive democratic reform. For bringing power back to the people. Where the founders intended it to be. Our democracy will always be worth the fight.

I yield the floor.